

Dear Geoff:

Congratulations to the MARGINS Steering Committee and the community for a successful review, a very productive workshop in San Antonio and the resulting impressive and expansive draft science plan. NSF has now also received a very positive evaluation of the plan from the Watts' Committee. It is thus my pleasure to inform you that the decision has been made to continue margins-related research as broadly envisaged in the new draft science plan for GeoPRISMS.

Although details of the guidelines under which the new program will operate will have to be worked out later, at this stage it is clear that the GeoPRISMS draft science plan represents a significant expansion of the goals of MARGINS and we agree with the Watts' Committee's comment that the plan may be too "all-inclusive". Thus, it will be a real challenge for the community, through the workshops planned for the near future, to develop a more focused implementation plan for GeoPRISMS that has clearly defined goals, a realistic plan for achieving those goals, and metrics against which the success of the program can be judged in a 5-year mid-term review.

The community also needs to be encouraged to diversify its funding base by participating in planned new programs (such as Dynamic Earth and CRI), leverage allied programs such as IODP and EarthScope, and also look to core programs for support. It is obvious that funds designated as "fenced" resources for GeoPRISMS would not be nearly enough to achieve all of the ambitious goals of GeoPRISMS. This will allow the GeoPRISMS community to compete with other communities in Marine Geology and Earth Sciences for the best ideas and the best science. Sequestered funds can be effectively used to support an office (which performs vital functions to build and nurture the community) and fund certain critical science and infrastructure needs. Thus, it will be a critical task for the GeoPRISM leadership is to develop a new funding strategy for their implementation plan.

We will proceed with the upcoming submission date (July 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 for FY2011 funding) for proposals under the new program. FY2011 is to be considered a part of the period of transition and the community is encouraged to submit proposals for future planning and synthesis activities, and science proposals for areas where a considerable community consensus already exists and are in a greater state of readiness for implementation (e.g., Cascadia), as well as experimental or theoretical activities that do not require field efforts.

Yours truly,

Bilal U. Haq/OCE/MG&G